

# TOPIC 2: yourCHOICE

## Get Up and Move!

### Skill-Based Outcomes

Preteens who participate in this activity will be able to:

- ❖ Talk about the benefits of active living.
- ❖ Identify roadblocks that keep them from regular physical activity.
- ❖ Come up with ways to sit less and move more.
- ❖ Use the “talk-sing test” to find the right level of physical activity.
- ❖ Make active living fun!
- ❖ Prepare an easy, tasty snack drink.

### Empowerment Messages

- ❖ Active living is good for your body. It also helps you make the most of your appearance.
- ❖ Being active helps you relax and feel less stress.
- ❖ Being active is a fun way to spend time with your family and friends.
- ❖ It’s easy to fit active living into your everyday life. You don’t need to be an athlete. Just find ways to sit less and move more.

### Activity Summary

(Icebreaker) **Untie the Knot!**\* - Preteens “untie a human knot” to explore how to solve a problem, such as getting over obstacles to active living.

- 1 **“Top 10” for Active Living** - They brainstorm “top moves”—reasons and ways to move more.
- 2 **“Body Talk”** - Preteens get their bodies moving at different “body-talk” stations to see if they feel fit and if they need to consider how to boost their level of physical activity.
- 3 **Get Vertical!** - They check out the Physical Activity Pyramid on the *Move It!* poster for fun ways to sit less and move more—and so get enough, more, and plenty of the physical activities for fitness.
- 4 (Afterschool Snack) **Making a Juice Refresher** - Each person creates a thirst-quenching fruit juice blend to replace fluids after being active.

(Wrap up) **What’s yourCHOICE?** - Each person comes up with personal steps to move more and sit less—and so puts his or her “power of choice” in action.

\*Adapted from *Activities That Teach*.

## Getting Ready

### ● Read:

- ❖ Do You Know...? on the next page

### ● Display Posters:

- ❖ *Feed Me!*
- ❖ *Move It!*
- ❖ *FIGHT BAC!*

### ● Get:

#### For “Top 10’ for Active Living”

- ❖ Large paper, marker, tape

#### For “Body Talk”

- ❖ One jump rope (or two ropes for double Dutch)\*
- ❖ Two (15 ounces) unopened soup cans\*
- ❖ Clock or watch with a second hand
- ❖ Tape recorder and audiotape or CD player and CD with fast music for dancing

\* You’ll need more if you have more than one person doing the activity at a time. (Have volunteer preteens help set up. They might also help others at each “body-talk” station during the activity.)

#### For “Making a Juice Refresher” (snack activity)\*\*

- ❖ Ingredients: three or more types of fruit juices (orange, pineapple, grapefruit, apple, cranberry, grape, others), oranges and lemons (enough so each participant has a wedge when they’re cut), ice cubes or crushed ice, graham crackers—reimbursable food item
- ❖ Equipment: cutting board, knife, stirring spoon, serving pitchers (optional), paper cups with forks to serve orange and lemon wedges, ice “scooper”
- ❖ Table setting: paper cups, spoons, napkins

\*\* If your program has been approved to serve USDA’s Afterschool Snacks, the snack served as part of this activity may qualify for reimbursement. For each participant, **serve at least 6 ounces of fruit juice and another food item such as 4 squares of graham crackers.**

#### For “Wrapping Up: What’s yourCHOICE?”

- ❖ “yourCHOICE” handout\*\*\* and folder for each participant
- ❖ pens or pencils
- ❖ (Optional) some form of recognition for each participant

\*\*\* Reminder: Collect handouts for next session.

## Do You Know...?

**Why encourage preteens to keep moving?** Active living promotes physical, social, and emotional health now and in the future. Regular physical activity can help them...

- ❖ Have fun with their friends and family
- ❖ Improve relations with their family
- ❖ Cope with stress
- ❖ Get over the “blues”
- ❖ Sleep better
- ❖ Make the most of their appearance
- ❖ Improve their weight
- ❖ Build strength and endurance
- ❖ Move with more ease and flexibility
- ❖ Feel good about themselves
- ❖ Promote overall health
- ❖ Develop skills in sports

Here’s another reason. Most preteens care about their looks. They may worry that eating too much will make them fat. Doing “without” is no fun! The good news is: If they keep moving, they won’t need to be as concerned about how much they eat. Anyway, being active matches other priorities. It’s fun, good for them, and helps them look good.

**How much physical activity is enough?** Getting most preteens to sit less and move more is the most appropriate goal. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend being physically active at least 60 minutes a day, most days of the week. Walking and riding a bike are easy ways to be active. Preteens can gain even more health benefits with increased amounts of time, as well as more intense activities such as running or one-on-one basketball. They can be active for 60 minutes at a time, or spread it out during everyday activities or in individual or team sports.

**Do preteens need to join organized sports to get enough exercise?** No. Anyone can be physically active without being an athlete. Organized sports, self-directed activities (such as Frisbee, yard games, skating, and biking, even doing your chores at home), and everyday activities can all have plenty of health benefits. In fact, preteens are more likely to stay active as they grow up if they don’t rely just on organized sports to keep moving. Organized sports can be harder to schedule as people get older.

### **How can you encourage preteens to move more?**

Many preteens do not get enough physical activity. Starting at age 13 or so, activity levels often spiral down. Help them come up with ways to stay active as they get older. See the next page for some suggestions for overcoming inactivity.

**What can someone suggest?**

- ❖ “Consider this: Sitting around too much can give you flabby muscles and may result in weight gain.”
- ❖ “All you need are everyday things: for example, grassy field, sidewalk, running track, basketball court...and bricks, milk jugs, cans. We have them all here!”
- ❖ “Make it part of your daily routine: for example, walk as you talk on the phone, use stairs, walk with a friend, do something while you watch TV, walk to the store.”
- ❖ “Give it a chance. Try it for a while. Make an effort to enjoy it. Find an activity you like to do.”
- ❖ “We’ll try some things that might be fun for you.”
- ❖ “Find a friend in our group to be your exercise buddy.”
- ❖ “You aren’t alone. Others may be thinking more about what they’re doing than looking at you.”
- ❖ “Many everyday activities won’t make you sweat, mess up your hair, or break a nail. Even if they did, what’s more important: how you look for just a little while or your health for life?”

**Why not move more?**

- ❖ “It’s easier to sit around.”
- ❖ “There’s no equipment or place to do it.”
- ❖ “There’s no time.”
- ❖ “I don’t like to exercise.”
- ❖ “I don’t know what to do.”
- ❖ “Friends and family aren’t physically active.”
- ❖ “I’m embarrassed.”
- ❖ “I can’t stay looking good.”

**How can preteens put action in their lives and have fun, too?**

Preteens don’t need to be athletes or join a sports team to be active. Encourage them to spend less time sitting in front of the TV and playing computer games and to spend more time in active daily activities, such as walking, using stairs, and cutting grass. Developing habits for everyday activity is easier to sustain for a lifetime than going out for sports.

**How do you know if your body is getting a good workout?**

Use the “talk-sing test:”

- ❖ **If you can talk while doing a physical activity**, you’re probably moving at a pace that’s right for you.
- ❖ **If you’re too breathless to talk**, slow down.
- ❖ **If you can sing**, you may not be working hard enough—so get moving!

## Ten Easy Ways to Get Physical

### 1 TAKE YOUR FEET.

Forget about asking your folks for a ride or taking the bus. Put your feet to the ground and start walking. Your feet will thank you, your heart will thank you, and Mother Nature will thank you for cutting down on pollution.

### 2 TRY IN-LINE SKATING.

Fun, fast, and easy to learn, skateboarding and in-line skating are great ways to spend a day outside with friends. Remember: wear the gear (helmet plus knee, wrist, and elbow pads).

### 3 TAKE THE STAIRS.

Forget the elevator. Take the stairs every chance you can. You'll get a workout without even thinking.

### 4 WALK THE DOG.

Whether you volunteer or get paid, dog walking is a fun, furry way to be physically active.

### 5 EARN EXTRA CASH.

That's right, make money while helping your body. Try mowing lawns, weeding gardens, shoveling snow, cleaning garages, and washing the family car or your bike.

### 6 BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR!

Help older people by walking their dog or volunteering to do household jobs.

### 7 TURN UP THE MUSIC.

Shake, rattle, and roll to your favorite tunes. It doesn't matter if you move to rap, hip hop, or salsa music, or do the twist—as long as you move as you groove.

### 8 GO OUT AND PLAY.

Rake a mountain of leaves; jump in it. Make a snowman. Fly a kite. Have a Hula-Hoop contest. Jump rope; try double Dutch with two ropes for more fun!

### 9 JOIN A CLASS.

Make your moves with aerobics, kickboxing, karate, yoga, tae kwon do, or dancing.

### 10 BABY-SIT.

Sounds silly, but if you've never kept up with a toddler, you're in for a surprise. They move, and they move fast. Keeping your eye on a tot can challenge even the quickest.

## yourCHOICE Get Up and Move!

### Topic 2 Activities

## Getting Started: Untie the Knot!

*Start with an icebreaker. By “untying a human knot,” they’ll explore how to overcome obstacles, including roadblocks to physical activity.*

Have preteens stand in a circle, cross their arms, and hold hands with the person on each side.

- ❖ **Challenge them to unravel “the knot” without breaking the circle.** They’ll need to turn, twist, and step over hands without letting go. If a hand slips, they must reconnect the circle just as it was.
- ❖ **Encourage preteens to use problem-solving skills,** as they decide how to move to work out a solution. Encourage them, but avoid offering hints unless time becomes limited. Be sure they succeed.

**When they’ve succeeded, challenge their thinking.** Keep the discussion open-ended to help preteens talk freely. Give everyone a chance to share his or her thoughts.

- ❖ When did you last move your body more than 30 minutes? How often do you do it?
- ❖ What is a roadblock? *(Something that keeps you from doing something or that separates you from a goal.)*
- ❖ What roadblock were you just trying to overcome? *(Being tangled up when we needed to form a circle.)* **POINT OUT:** Even if you thought it was impossible to untie the knot, you tried until you did it – and you reached your goal.

**Continue the discussion, applying the icebreaker to active living.** **ASK:**

- ❖ What keeps you from moving more? Brainstorm a list of roadblocks. Give everyone a chance to name some personal roadblocks, such as being active every day.
- ❖ If you got \$500 to get rid of those roadblocks, how would you do it?
- ❖ What’s the difference between a roadblock and an excuse? Were any roadblocks to moving just excuses? **POINT OUT:** Some people make excuses for things they don’t want to do. Moving more may seem harder than it really is.

- ❖ **POINT OUT:** If you would take \$500 to move more, then you really don't have reasons (no roadblocks) to sit a lot. You just have hurdles to get over. Some hurdles are higher or more challenging than others.
  
- ❖ What do you think? Is "I don't like it" or "I'm not good at it" a roadblock or an excuse? **POINT OUT:** You may feel this way if you've had a bad experience. That doesn't mean you'd feel the same way about other fun ways to move more. There's probably something you'd enjoy and be good at.

## Activity 1: “Top 10” for Active Living

*A simple brainstorming activity helps preteens come up with reasons why and ways to overcome roadblocks to active living.*

Have preteens brainstorm for their “Top 10” reasons to move more and sit less. Encourage them to have fun with their list. Explore how moving more fits with their own values. **POINT OUT:** To overcome hurdles for moving more, you may need to change your routine, or try activities you haven’t done before.

**Brainstorm and write ideas for “Top 10” reasons to move more...**

- ❖ Have fun with my friends
- ❖ Get along better with my family
- ❖ Deal with stress
- ❖ Get over the “blues”
- ❖ Feel more relaxed
- ❖ Look better
- ❖ Get stronger
- ❖ Have more energy
- ❖ Be more flexible
- ❖ Enjoy my snacks
- ❖ Relieve boredom
- ❖ Feel better about myself

## Activity 2: “Body Talk”

Set up “body-talk” stations. Activities at each station give preteens a chance to consider how to move more and improve their fitness. There’s no target goal for these activities. Instead, each activity is a starting point to help preteens set goals for moving more.

### Before they start:

- ❖ **Play upbeat background music** to set the mood for a fun experience.
- ❖ **POINT OUT:** Each “body-talk” station is a fun activity to help you see what you can do and where you might improve. It’s not a competition!

Have preteens take turns going from one “body-talk” station to another, perhaps in pairs. Invite the volunteer preteens who helped set up to explain what preteens need to do at each station.

### ❖ Station 1: Jumping rope

Check your balance and coordination. **Count how many times in a row you can jump rope** without missing or getting tired. You might have preteens jump double Dutch with two ropes.

### ❖ Station 2: Can lifting

Check your arm strength. **Hold one unopened soup can tightly in each hand.** Now do two activities:

- **Try to raise your arms over your head 50 times** while holding the cans.
- **Put your arms straight out in front of you, and bring your hands up to your shoulders.**
- **ASK:** Can you do each activity 50 times all at once, in two sets of 25 or five sets of 10, or not at all?

### ❖ Station 3: Sitting up

Check your abdominal strength. Get a partner to help you.

- **Lie on a carpet or cushion with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor,** about 12 to 15 inches from your buttocks. Cross your arms in front of you.
- **Have your partner hold your feet flat while you bend to touch your knees with your elbows.** **ASK:** How many can you do in 1 minute?

**❖ Station 4: Stretching out**

Check your flexibility.

- Take off your shoes. **Face the wall, and sit on the floor with knees straight and locked.** Place your feet flat against the wall and approximately 12 inches apart. Without bouncing, **reach forward with your hands to touch the wall.** Leave your fingers there for 5 seconds. Do this three times.
- **ASK:** Can you touch the wall with your fingertips? With the palms of your hands?

**❖ Station 5: Moving fast**

Check your endurance with a game of indoor tag or by turning up some fast-paced music for rigorous dancing. Consider having everyone do this at the same time.

- First, **talk about the “talk-sing test”** as a way to decide if they’re getting a good workout. They should be able to talk not sing, as they play tag or dance. If they are too breathless to talk, slow down.
- Then, **take your pulse.** Before doing this activity, your pulse will probably be less than 120 beats per minute (BPM).

*How to Take Your Pulse:* Put the index and middle fingers of one hand on the wrist of the other hand where you can feel your pulse. Now, using a clock or watch with a second hand, count the number of beats for 6 seconds. Multiply by 10 to get your pulse for 60 seconds.

- **Warm up for 3 to 5 minutes.** Start by walking in place or around the room, and gradually move faster and faster.
- Now, **play tag or dance fast!** Keep it up as long as you can—up to 10 minutes if possible.
- **Take your pulse again.** After you’ve done the activity, your heart will beat faster:
  - moderate activity (120 to 150 BPM)
  - vigorous activity (more than 150 BPM)
- **Talk about the experience.** **ASK:** How long could you keep moving without being too tired? Could you talk? Sing?

**Talk about** how their bodies felt as they moved faster and more vigorously.

- ❖ **ASK:** How long did it take for your heart to beat faster? When did you breathe harder? Was your face warm or red? Did you sweat? What kind of shape are you in?
- ❖ **POINT OUT:** When your activity level goes up, your body naturally changes. Your heart needs to pump more blood to the muscles you use. You breathe harder because your muscles need more oxygen. Being active increases your body temperature so your face gets warm. You sweat as a way to cool down; it's okay to sweat!

**Talk about** how they did at each “body-talk” station. **ASK:**

- ❖ How did you do with each activity? What can you do to improve? Why will that be good for you?
- ❖ Encourage preteens to do “body-talk” activities at home—even help family members see what they can do and how they might improve.

*Tip:* Keep the “body-talk” equipment on hand during *The Power of Choice* sessions. That way, preteens can measure their progress as they add more physical activity to their everyday lives.

## Activity 3: Get Vertical!

Explore how to put this sound health advice in action: sit less and move more. The *Move It!* poster is filled with messages to explore about moving more.

Have them react to this fitness tip: “Watching less TV each day can help keep you fit!” **ASK:**

- ❖ To cut your TV “sitting” time, what can you do? Come up with a list of ways. (For example: *When watching your favorite shows, can you do something active while you watch?*) **POINT OUT:** It doesn’t count to spend more time chatting over the phone and less time watching TV if you’re still sitting! You need to get vertical!
- ❖ What can you do instead of sitting by the tube and the phone? Ideas from the “Ten Easy Ways” (see page 17) lists fit here. **POINT OUT:** Walking to the store for a high-calorie snack instead of watching TV, may defeat the purpose.

Using the *Move It!* poster, **ASK:**

- ❖ What do you think this poster is saying? (*Don’t sit—move.*)
- ❖ Where do TV watching and computer games fit on the Activity Pyramid?
- ❖ From the lists we just came up with, which activities might you do “Enough?” “More?” “Plenty?”

Remind them to use the “talk-sing test” to see if their bodies are getting a good workout!

## Activity 4: Making a Juice Refresher

To quench their thirst after these activities, have preteens concoct their own fruit juice drink.

Prepare the Juice Refresher together:

- ❖ **Give preteens a chance to wash their hands** before handling foods. Talk about the importance of hand washing to help ensure food safety. Refer to the messages on the *FIGHT BAC!* poster.

**Food Safety-Smarts:** Clean your cutting boards with hot, soapy water after you use them. Nonporous cutting boards can be put in the dishwasher.

- ❖ **Have two volunteer preteens help:** Shake juices and pour into separate pitchers; get out beverage cups, stirring spoon, and ice with “scooper;” rinse and cut orange/lemon wedges then serve in cups with forks; set individual spoons and napkins on serving table.
- ❖ **Have preteens mix two or more juices** in any way they’d like. They can add a squeeze from a lemon or orange wedge, too.

As they enjoy their Juice Refresher, talk about how this fruit refresher helps keep them healthy.

- ❖ **POINT OUT:** Fluids are important anytime—including after being active—to replace fluids they lose with sweat.
- ❖ **Have them look at the *Feed Me!* poster** to see how fruit juice fits in a healthful way of eating.

## Wrapping Up: What's yourCHOICE?

Wrap up by making “yourCHOICE” action plans for being more physically active.

Review what they learned about this topic. **ASK:**

- ❖ Why is it smart to move more and sit less?
- ❖ What are some easy ways you can do that?
- ❖ What choices can you make to move more and sit less? Why? **Talk about the goals and actions** they can take to be more physically active. *(For example, GOAL: Spend less time sitting in front of the TV. Actions: Take a walk each week with a friend. Substitute 1/2 hour of TV watching each day for doing something fun with my pet or family. Watch TV while helping around the house.)*
- ❖ **POINT OUT:** Almost any moderate or more intense activity is okay. Being involved in team or school sports isn't necessary.

On their “yourCHOICE” handout, have each person write a goal and three steps he or she can take this week to sit less and move more. (Note: At the next session, ask them what actions they actually took.)

Have the participants see how they did with the goal and action steps each person wrote on their own “yourCHOICE” handout for the last topic. They can check (✓) the steps they took so far. (Optional) Each person who took at least one action receives some form of recognition.

Collect their handouts to use in upcoming sessions.